

McGill University
AFRI 598: Research Seminar in African Studies
(Winter 2021)

Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays – 11:35-12:55

Instructor: Mark Kwakye Frimpong

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Office Hours: Thursdays – 2-4pm or by appointment

Prerequisite: An introductory course in any of the disciplines studying Africa is required. This course is open to final year African Studies Program students and to others by permission of the Program Advisor.

Course Description

This course uses **an interdisciplinary approach** to understand topics that connect Africa's past with its present and future political, economic, social, and environmental realities. In particular, it links the legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and the struggles for independence to prominent issues in contemporary Africa. Relevant contemporary realities in Africa include but not limited to climate change, urbanization, competing conceptions of gender and sexuality, democratization, and governance. These themes will be examined through a variety of disciplinary lenses, including anthropology, development studies, economics, environmental studies, history, political science, among others.

This course is not a lecture. Instead, it is a research seminar driven by **student participation**. Students are required to read assigned materials before each seminar session and to use them to inform a discussion about the prescribed topic. The role of the instructor is to facilitate and direct the discussion when necessary. The seminar involves presentations by students as well as individual and group exercises. Students are expected to participate in the course outside of prescribed seminar times by interacting via the myCourses discussion board. This will be a platform for discussing current themes and methods in African studies. Students will also present results of their research in class.

The course is divided into three sections. The first section covers weeks 1 to 10 and addresses pre-determined topics that are prominent in Africa's current affairs and its academic discourses. In the second section, which covers weeks 11 to 14, students present their own research projects. The final week of the semester is reserved for an interdisciplinary analysis of an as yet-to-be decided topic. It may be a prominent news in Africa.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students are expected to:

- Have greater knowledge about tools to analyse issues in Africa's past, present, and future from a range of disciplinary perspectives.
- Gain greater awareness of multiple sources of data to develop diverse narratives about Africa.
- Improve their research skills so that they can design, conduct, write up, and disseminate their own independent research.

Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated on their participation in different aspects of the course and on their independent research projects.

Participation: Attendance of and participation in each seminar are **mandatory**. Students are expected to keep up with assigned readings. They must come to the seminar prepared to participate in discussions, in-class assignments and activities designed to ensure a deeper understanding of course materials. Students will be evaluated on the quality of their contributions to discussions and in-class activities. Participation will also involve discussions on the myCourses platform. MyCourses will be used to follow up on in-class discussions and to initiate interactions and debates about contemporary issues in Africa. Because this course is a participation-driven seminar, participation will be **20 percent** of the final grade. Absences must be approved in advance or justified with relevant documentation.

Response paper and presentation: Each student is required to write two response papers of the assigned readings for two different weeks. The paper must be submitted via myCourses prior to the commencement of that week's class. Students are responsible for choosing the weeks for their response papers. The response paper must be 2-3 pages long and double spaced. Students will also present the highlights of their response papers in class and then pose at least three questions (based on the week's readings) for in-class discussions. The response paper and the presentation will constitute **20 percent** of the final grade.

The response paper **must not** summarize the week's readings. Instead, it must focus on answering the following questions:

1. What is the author trying to convey to his or her audience?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument or point of view?
3. What is confusing or unsatisfying about the reading?
4. What themes emerge from the week's readings?
5. How do the readings for the week interact with one another?
6. How do the arguments compare and contrast with the view of other authors you have read in the course or elsewhere?

Independent research project: One of the main objectives of this course is to enable students improve their research, analytical, and writing skills by designing and conducting their own research projects. The topic must relate to the themes of this course and must be approved by the instructor before the student embarks on the project. Meetings to this effect will be organised in the second and third weeks of the term. Each student must meet the instructor during this period (weeks 2&3) to discuss their research topic and question(s). Students are required to submit a **research proposal**, which outlines their research question(s), tentative answer (hypotheses/thesis statements or arguments) and the kinds of evidence they will use to evaluate the tentative answers. The research proposal must be no more than 500 words. You must provide a bibliography of five (5) peer reviewed publications and/or books and five (5) non-peer-reviewed sources such as news articles, government reports, and reports by non-governmental organizations, which will be used for the research project. The bibliography is not part of the word count. Students must submit their proposals via myCourses by 11:59pm on Friday, 12 February 2021. The research proposal will contribute **10 percent** to the final grade. Each student

will then present their research proposal along with their initial findings to their peers in seminar sessions during weeks 11 to 14. Presenters must circulate **one or two relevant readings** to students **on the Friday** before they are due to present. The presentation itself must not be more than 15 minutes long. A student, assigned to critique the presenter's work, will present their critique. This will be followed by a discussion based on the presentation and the circulated readings. Students must hand in the initial drafts of the research paper on which their presentations are based no later than **16th March 2021**. The research presentation will form **5 percent** of the final grade. The final version of the research paper must incorporate the relevant comments of the person assigned to critique your research paper and the in-class feedback from peers. It must be submitted via myCourses by 11:59pm on **23rd April 2021**. The final paper must be between 4000 and 5000 words and is worth **45 percent**.

In sum, grades are determined by your performance on the following:

20% Participation

20% Response papers and presentation

60% Research paper

 10% Proposal

 5% Oral presentation of paper

 45% Final paper

OFFICIAL POLICIES

Late Penalties: There will be no extensions for written work unless a student has made prior arrangements with the instructor. There will be a 2.5% penalty per each day that a piece of graded work is submitted late (inclusive of weekends). Extensions will be granted only in cases of genuine emergency. Students must discuss their reason(s) for extension with the instructor.

Final Grades: Students are required to complete all assigned course work in order to receive a passing grade. No incompletes will be given except in cases of genuine emergency.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

« L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/). »

Language: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue). »

Changes to the schedule: Although it is my intent to cover the materials outlined in the following schedule, it is possible that unforeseeable events will necessitate minor changes to or deletions from the schedule. Changes may be made to address practical contingencies, pedagogical concerns (e.g., assignments or due dates), or other similar issues. Any changes will be communicated in advance to the extent possible, either in class or via myCourses.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1 (Jan 7): Introduction and getting started

Week 2 (12&14 Jan): Long-term legacies: Trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and decolonization

Blake, William. 1971. *The History of Slavery and the Slave Trade, Ancient and Modern*. Detroit: Negro History Press. Read: Preface and Chapters 7, and 36 [Ebook: <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/638479879>]

Ekeh, Peter. 1975. Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17(1), 91-112. <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/5548851645>.

Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa Since 1940: The Past and the Present*. Read: Chapter 1: “Introduction: from colonies to Third World” [Ebook: <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/47930687>]

For extra reading

U.S. Department of State. 1965. Telegram from the Embassy in Ghana to the Department of State. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume xxiv, Africa. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d252>

Nugent, Paul. 1996. ‘Arbitrary Lines and the People’s Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa,’ in Nugent and Asiwaju, eds. *African Boundaries: Barrier, Conduits and Opportunities*. <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/33246144>

Melber, Henning and Roger Southall. 2009. ‘Introduction: A New Scramble for Africa,’ in Henning Melber and Roger Southall, eds. *A New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment, and Development*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/401141637>.

Week 3 (19&21 Jan): Reforms in political and economic governance

Zeilig, Leo. 2009. “The Student-Intelligentsia in Sub-Saharan Africa: Structural Adjustment, Activism and Transformation,” *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 119: 63-78. <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/7786233546>

Williams, David. 2010. “Making a Liberal State: ‘Good Governance’ in Ghana,” *Review of African Political Economy* 37, no. 126: 403-419. <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/7787010759>

Bayat, Asef. 2013. "The Arab Spring and Its Surprises," *Development and Change* 44, no. 3: 587- 601. doi:10.1111/dech.12030 <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/5153081913>

Vengroff, Richard and Michael Magala. 2001. "Democratic Reform, Transition, and Consolidation: Evidence from Senegal's 2000 Presidential Election," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 39, no. 1: 129-162.

For extra reading

Van de Walle, Nicolas. 2007. "Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss? The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa," pp. 50-67 in Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson, eds. *Patrons, Clients, and Policies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kasfir, Nelson. 1998. "Civil society, the state and democracy in Africa," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2: 123-149.

Week 4 (26&28 Jan): Electoral and Party Politics

Opalo, Kennedy Ochieng. 2012. "African Elections: Two Divergent Trends," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 3: 80-93.

Doorenspleet, Renske and Lisa Nijzink. 2015. "Do Party Systems Matter for Democracy in Africa?" pp. 1-21 in Renske Doorenspleet and Lia Nijzink, eds. *Party Systems and Democracy in Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Available online: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1057/9781137011718>.

Van Ham, Carolien and Staffan Lindberg. 2019. "Reconsidering African Elections," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. New York: Oxford University.

For extra reading

Bleck, Jaimie and Nicolas van de Walle. 2018. *Electoral Politics in Africa since 1990: Continuity in Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Paret, Marcel. 2018. "Beyond Post-Apartheid Politics? Cleavages, Protests and Elections in South Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 56, no. 3 (Sept): 471 – 496.

Week 5 (2&4 Feb): Demographic realities: population and urbanization

Canning, David, Sangeeta Raja, and Abdo Yazbeck. 2015. *Africa's Demographic Transition: Dividend or Disaster?* [Ebook: <https://elibrary-worldbank-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/doi/pdf/10.1596/978-1-4648-0489-2>] Read "Overview," pp. 1-42.

Raleigh, Clionadh. 2014. "Migration, Urbanization, and Political Power in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 104, no. 2: 253 – 261.

Fox, Sean. 2014. "The Political Economy of Slums: Theory and Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa," *World Development* 54 (Feb): 191–203.

Watson, Vanessa. 2014. "African Urban Fantasies: Dreams or Nightmares?" *Environment and Urbanization* 26, no. 1 (April): 215 – 231.

For extra reading

Boone, Catherine and Michael Wahman. 2015. "Rural Bias in African Electoral Systems: Legacies of Unequal Representation in African Democracies," *Electoral Studies* 40 (Dec): 335 - 346.

Koter, Dominika. 2013. "Urban and Rural Voting Patterns in Senegal: The Spatial Aspects of Incumbency, c. 1978 – 2012," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 51, no. 4 (Dec): 653–679.

Week 6 (9&11 Feb): Religion, ethnicity, and politics of identity

Abbink, Jon. 2014. "Religion and Politics in Africa: The Future of 'the Secular,'" *Africa Spectrum* 49, no. 3: 83–106.

Iwuchukwu, Marinus Chijioke. 2018. "Pentecostalism, Islam, and Religious Fundamentalism in Africa," pp. 43 – 63 in Afolayan, Adeshina, Olajumoke Yacob-Hiliso, and Toyin Falola, eds. *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan. [E-book: <https://link-springer-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-74911-2>]

Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science* 98 no. 4: 529-545.

For extra reading

Afolayan, Adeshina, Olajumoke Yacob-Hiliso, and Toyin Falola, eds. 2018. *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan. [E-book: <https://link-springer-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-74911-2>]

Dowd, Caitriona. 2015. "Grievances, Governance, and Islamist Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, no. 4 (Dec): 505 – 531.

Ellis, Stephen and Gerrie ter Haar. 2007 "Religion and Politics: Taking African Epistemologies Seriously," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45, no. 3 (Sept): 385 – 401.

Week 7 (16&18 Feb): Confronting environmental challenges

Serdeczny, Olivia, Sophie Adams, Florent Baarsch, Dim Coumou, Alexander Robinson, William Hare, Michiel Schaeffer, Mahé Perrette, and Julia Reinhardt. 2017. "Climate Change Impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Physical Changes to the Their Social Repercussions," *Regional Environmental Change* 17, no. 6 (Aug): 1585 – 1600.

Archer, E.R.M., N.M. Oettlé, R. Louw, and M.A. Tadross. 2008. "'Farming on the Edge' in Arid Western South Africa: Climate Change and Agriculture in Marginal Environments," *Geography* 93, no. 2: 98-107.

Armah, Frederick, Isaac Luginaah, Herbert Hambati, Ratana Chuenpagdee, and Gwyn Campbell. 2015. "Assessing Barriers to Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Tanzania: Does Where You Live Matter?" *Population and Environment* 37, no. 2: 231-263.

Mbaye, Ahmadou Aly. 2019. "Local Institutions can Mitigate Climate-Related Conflict in the Sahel." Viewpoint in Africa Growth Initiative ed., *Foresight Africa: Top Priorities for the Continent in 2019*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute. Posted on 18 March 2019: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2019/03/18/local-institutions-can-mitigate-climate-related-conflict-in-the-sahel/> [To access the whole volume: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BLS18234_BRO_book_007_WEB1.pdf]

Jegede, Ademola Oluborode. 2018. "Africa versus Climate Change Loss and Damages: Exploring AU Regional Channels for Influencing National Policy," *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 5, no. 2 (Aug): 207-226.

For extra reading

Chin-Yee, Simon. 2016. "Briefing: Africa and the Paris Climate Change Agreement," *African Affairs* 115, no. 459 (April): 359 – 368.

Conway, Declan, Emma Archer van Garderen, Delphine Deryng, Steve Dorling, Tobias Krueger, Willem Landman, Bruce Lankford, Karen Lebek, Tim Osborn, Claudia Ringler, James Thurlow, Tingju Zhu, and Carole Dalin. 2015. "Climate and Southern Africa's Water-Energy-Food Nexus," *Nature Climate Change* 5: 837-846.

Koubi, Vally. 2019. "Climate Change and Conflict," *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (May): 343-360.

Week 8 (23&25 Feb): Public health

Patterson, Amy. 2020. "Public Health," pp. 217-238 in Peter Schraeder, ed. *Understanding Contemporary Africa*. 6th edition. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. This chapter will be shared via myCourses.

Chigudu, Simukai. 2019. "The Politics of Cholera, Crisis and Citizenship in Urban Zimbabwe: 'People were Dying like Flies,'" *African Affairs* 118, no. 472: 413 – 434.

De Waal, Alex. 2020. "Governance Implications of Epidemic Disease in Africa: Updating the Agenda for COVID-19." Research Memo. Conflict Research Programme, London School of Economics. Available online: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/104471/>

Leach, Melissa. 2020. "Echoes of Ebola: Social and Political Warnings for the COVID-19 Response in African Settings," *Somatosphere Forum Post* (6 March 2020): <http://somatosphere.net/forumpost/echoes-of-ebola/>

Nordling, Lisa. 2020. "Africa's Pandemic Puzzle: Why So Few Cases and Deaths?" *Science* 369, no. 6505: 755 – 757.

For extra reading

Wilkinson, Annie and Melissa Leach. 2014. "BRIEFING: Ebola – Myths, Realities, and Structural Violence," *African Affairs* 114, no. 454: 136 - 148.

Leach, Melissa, Ian Scoones, and Andrew Stirling. 2010. "Governing Epidemics in an Age of Complexity: Narratives, Politics and Pathways to Sustainability," *Global Environmental Change* 20, no. 3 (Aug): 369 – 377.

MacLean, Lauren Morris. 2002. "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa: An Institutional Analysis of Colonial Rule and State Social Policies in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37, no. 3 (Fall): 64 – 90.

Week 9 (2&4 Mar): Study break

Week 10 (9&11 Mar): Gender in the public sphere

Amadiume, Ifi & Caplan, Patricia. 1987. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed Books. Read: "Preface to the critique influence change edition," pp. xi-xvi; "Introduction," pp. 13-23. [Ebook: <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/905920507>]

Alidou, Ousseina. 2005. *Engaging Modernity: Muslim Women and the Politics of Agency in Postcolonial Niger*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. Read: "Introduction," pp. 3-2

Wang, Vibeke and Mi Yung Yoon. 2018. "Recruitment Mechanisms for Reserved Seats for Women in Parliament and Switches to Non-Quota Seats: A Comparative Study of Tanzania and Uganda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 56, no. 2 (June): 299 – 324.

For extra reading

Bâ, Mariama. 1982. *So long a letter* (African Writers Series). London: Virago. (Chapters TBD) <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/16610104>

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Read: Chapter 2: "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," pp. 43-84. [Ebook: <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/229439602>]

Andrade, Susan. 2007. "Rioting Women and Writing Women: Gender, Class, and the Public Sphere in Africa", pp. 85-107 in Catherine Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan Miescher, eds. *Africa after Gender?* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Week 11 (16&18 Mar): Research presentations and reviews by students

Week 12 (23&25 Mar): Research presentations and reviews by students

Week 13 (30 Mar &1 Apr): Research presentations and reviews by students

Week 14 (6&8 Apr): Research presentations and reviews by students

Week 15 (13 Apr): Interdisciplinary analysis of a case study

Readings TBD